

Appraisal of Managerial Roles of Study Centre Coordinators of College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast

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Abstract

The study assessed how students and course tutors on distance education programmes of the College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast appraised their study centre coordinators' performance in terms of human relations, behaviour, organising teaching and learning facilities; and handling complaints. This type of appraisal, where students and tutors representing customers and subordinates respectively, is usually referred to as the 360-feedback method in human resource management. Concurrent embedded study design from the pragmatists' epistemic approach was adopted for the study. Simple random and purposive sampling technique were respectively used to sample 1228 final year students and 217 course tutors from 53 study centres; and five coordinators from each of the three Zones across the ten regions of Ghana for triangulation purposes. Data was analysed with descriptive statistics, independent t-test and a one-way between-groups analysis of variance. The study found that coordinators' behavior and human relations were rated higher as compared to complaints handling and organising study centre activities. This was blamed on lack of capacity to address most of students and tutors challenges; and teaching load of coordinators. It was recommended that the management of College of Distance Education should increase the capacity of coordinators for district and regional study centres as well as the Zones in terms of resources and technology to be able to take immediate steps to solve students and tutors' complaints.

Keywords: appraisal, human relations, behavior, complaints; teaching learning activities

1. Introduction

Performance appraisal (PA) is a universal approach used by organisations or institutions to make judgment about their employees. Performance appraisal is a very essential tool for the effective management and evaluation of staff. According to Boateng (2011), the aim of PA is to improve the organisational performance as well as individual development of staff. For these reasons PA systems in organisations usually focuses on measuring and improving the actual performance of the employees and also the future potential of the employees. Moats cited in Boateng (2011) revealed that when PA is conducted properly, appraisal can serve three major purposes. These are showing employees how to improve their performance, setting goals for employees, and lastly helping managers to assess subordinates' effectiveness and take actions related to hiring, promotions, demotions, training, compensation, job design, transfers, and terminations. Thus, PA can be seen as a clear and concise, regular and unbiased system of rating an employee's performance in his current position, which can also be used to determine how far the employee can go in career development (Uma, Obidike, & Ogwuru, 2013).

Approaches to measuring employees' performance are categorised into traditional and modern methods (Bhattacharyya, 2011). Under the traditional method the supervisor (boss) generally have power and the entire authority in evaluating the performance of individual employee on a job. Deb (2006) posited that PA methods commonly used under the traditional methods of performance appraisal include the paired comparison, grading, forced distribution, ranking, critical incidents field, check lists, and group reviews among others. The overriding authority that the supervisor wield under the traditional system because of the one way system where the employee is and can only be appraised by the supervisor has been identified as source of challenge. Thus, Uma, Obidike and Ogwuru (2013) disclosed that under the traditional system, judgments from superiors are likely sometimes to be

based on errors such as stereotyping, biases and prejudice from previous actions to the detriment of the actual performance exhibited on the job. The resultant effect of this in such working environment is that the superior may see an employee as 'an enemy' and the reverse could also be true.

To address the challenges that have bedeviled the traditional system of performance appraisal, modern methods or approaches have been introduced. The modern approaches are purely employee centred unlike the traditional methods which are highly superior centred. Deb (2006) and Bhattacharyya (2011) revealed several modern PA methods to include behavioural anchored rating scale, management by objective (MBO) technique, assessment centres, human resource accounting, and the 360 degree feedback.

The 360-degree feedback, which is one of the modern PA methods or approaches, is the main focus of this study. The 360 feedback methods solicit information from diverse sources in an attempt to reveal or portray the accurate picture of the contributions of an employee to the development of the entire organisation. The varied sources that 360 feedback information could be obtained include peers, customers, self, supervisors and subordinates. Herbert (2010), therefore, concluded that the 360-degree feedback is a relevant tool for improving the quality of employees, as well as leadership and management in organisations.

PA of employees is equally an important tool for assessing the performances of workers in educational institutions such as the College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast. The College of Distance Education was established by the University of Cape Coast in 1997 to provide opportunities for people to pursue higher education; train more professional teachers for Ghana Education Service, and train higher caliber of personnel for national development among others (CoDE/UCC, 2017). The College since its inception has grown in terms of number of study centres and number of programmes as well as number of students. Currently the college has 83 (and still adding) study centres across the length and breadth of all the 10 regions of Ghana. The College also has grown from one academic programme (DBE) to 10 academic programmes with almost 50,000 students as at 2017. The expansion of the College to the various districts in Ghana has attracted several course tutors (over 2700) to teach students on the various courses mounted on the distance mode by the College.

Study centres coordinators man and exercise oversight responsibilities over teaching and learning activities at these study centres. Coordinators also report directly to their respective regional bosses usually referred to as the Regional Resident Tutors (RRTs). The ten regional representatives of the college (RRTs) have been divided into three zones such as Middle, Southern and Northern Zones. Apart from being responsible for course tutors at their respective study centres, the coordinators also recommend to the College available vacancies for appointment of new course tutors as well as the disengagement of a course tutor. Though University of Cape Coast has performance appraisal system for its staff, it does not extend the assessment to course tutors and coordinators on the distance education mode as at 2016.

However, coordinators response to students/tutors challenges, human relations and behavior exhibited towards them (students and course tutors) can serve as make or break affairs for the distance programme since these coordinators serve as the first line of contact or operational managers for the College and the University at the various study centres. The recent PA system introduced by the College of Distance Education only affords students the opportunity to evaluate their course tutors every six month. Thus, there is no PA system currently in place to assess the performance of coordinators manning the various study centres hosting academic programmes offered by the College of Distance Education, UCC. It is not clear how the two (tutors and students) key stakeholders in distance education perceives the performances of their superior to be. It is based on this background that this study sought to assess the performance of study centre coordinators from the perspectives of students and course tutors but not from management of CoDE perspective. Thus, a subordinate appraisal of superior, a characteristic of the 360-degree feedback of the modern PA approach is adopted in this study.

This therefore necessitated the formulation of one research question and six hypotheses to guide the study:

1. How do course tutors and students rate coordinators in terms of response to their challenges, human relations, organising teaching and learning activities at the study centres, and general behavior towards them?

Hypothesis 1

H0 There is no statistically significant difference between how students perceive coordinators' performance as compared to that of course tutors.

Hypothesis 2

H₀ There is no statistically significant difference in performance of study centre coordinators in terms of their regional location and factors of the study such as response to challenges, human relations, organising teaching and learning activities at the study centres, and general behavior towards students and course tutors.

Hypothesis 3

H₀ There is no statistically significant difference between zones of coordinators and the factors of the study such as response to problems, human relations, centre activities and behavior.

Hypothesis 4

H₀ There is no statistically significant difference in rating for study centre coordinators in terms of sex of a coordinator and factors of the study such as response to problems, human relations, centre activities and behavior.

Hypothesis 5

H₀ There are no statistically significant differences in rating of coordinators based on coordinators' rank and the four factors of the study.

Hypothesis 6

H₀ There is no statistically significant difference in rating for coordinators based on their age and the factors of the study.

1.1 Theoretical Perspective

The Expectancy theory by Victor Vroom (1964) was used to advance the argument of performance of employees in an organisation. The expectancy theory is based on three basic elements, namely expectancy, instrumentality, and valence (Daft, 2008). The theory is of the view that there is a relationship between effort at work, the performance and rewards received. Thus, an employee is motivated to give out his best if he/she believes that his effort will lead to performance and that performance will enable him/her to get more reward (Herbert, 2010; Lunenburg, 2011). This theory as well as the path-goal theory are however, very relevant for the traditional appraisal methods where the superior appraises the subordinate. For this study, it is the vise versa hence the need to employ the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory. This is because students and course tutors see the coordinators as representative of the College in the district. Thus, leadership qualities exhibited by these coordinators would likely influence continuous patronage of the academic programmes at the study centre.

LMX theory contends that leaders develop different relationships with their subordinates via different exchanges that can be called high or low quality. Leaders in LMX exchange use resources to meet the needs of the subordinates, with the expectation that the subordinate will respond through services. Debrincat (2015) listed factors of currencies of exchange as affect, loyalty, contribution and professional respect. The leader-follower relationship in the LMX theory is a fundamental human dimension of the leadership process (Hollander, 2008). It recognises that relationality, not merely positionality, is a key determinant in the success of leaders to influence followers (McKee, Boyatzis & Johnston, 2008). Thus, the extent to which subordinate will be motivated to give out their best may depend on a leader who relates well with subordinates.

Demands, Choices & Constraints (DCC) Management Model (Figure 1) also explains other aspects of leader follower relationship argument (Burns, 2013). The *demands* aspect of the model represents activities that must be done while the *constraints* also represent activities that cannot be done due to limitations of resources, technology among others. The *Choices* which lies between outward pushing Demands and inward pulling constraints are the activities that can be done given the respective demands and constraints. It is here that a leader's creativity can bring a competitive advantage (Dodgson & Gann, 2010; Herbert, 2010). The implication of the model to the appraisal of coordinators of the distance education study centres of CoDE/UCC in Ghana mean constraints (resources and technological) can limit the extent to which these coordinators can deliver to the admiration and expectations of stakeholders.

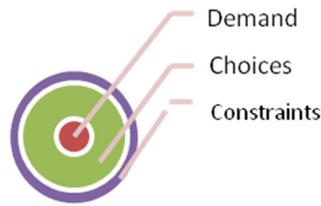


Figure 1. Stewart's DCC Management Model

Source: Holton (2014)

1.2 Conceptual and Empirical Discussions on Performance and Factors of the Study

It is the purpose of every human resources manager to make the most out of the available human resources in a most optimal manner to achieve targets effectively and efficiently. This aim is better achieved with managing performance of subordinates by maintaining, developing and relating well with them. Performance basically deals with achieving target or and satisfying stakeholders expectations. Several factors have been adduced in literature to have influence on performance. These factors could either be internal and external to the control of managers/supervisors. The focus of this study based on the leader follower exchange theory, is on four main internal factors to coordinators (supervisor). These are coordinators behavior towards students/tutors, human relations with students/tutors, response to students/tutors complaints and organising teaching and learning materials herein referred to as centre activities. Meanwhile, the study also took into account uncontrollable factors that could also influence the performance of coordinators. The next section, thus, focuses on the discussion of these concepts.

Supervisor/coordinators behavior, the first factor of this study was identified by Sikandar (2013) as a series of attitudes, characteristics and skills used by a manager in different situations in accordance with individual and organisational values. Blundel and Lockett (2011) identified attainment of organisational goals to be largely dependent on managers and their leadership behavior. Sikandar (2013) also posits that the use of a particular leadership behavior by managers affects both productivity and job satisfaction of the employees in Pakistan. Leadership theories according to Sikandar have proposed several leadership behaviors such as autocratic, bureaucratic, laissez-faire, charismatic, democratic, participative, situational, transactional, and transformational leadership. That notwithstanding, Holton (2014) also opined that a single leadership behavior is not ideal for every situation. For this reason Richard using the path-goal theory as basis, suggested that depending upon subordinates, and situations, different leadership behaviors will increase acceptance of leader by subordinates; level of satisfaction; and motivation to high performance. Thus, the centre coordinators' leadership style could influence course tutors and students expectations.

The second factor of the study is coordinators human relations with tutors and students. Superiors/coordinators' relationship with tutors/students is best perceived and understood as a line that exists between the two and a kind of psychological channel through which all communications, reactions, and feelings must flow back and forth (Konishi, Hymel, Zumbo & Li, 2010). Through this relationship channel, each party views, interprets, and reacts to the other. Openness described as the amount of freedom or naturalness between parties contributes to the quality or tone of the relationship, which, in turn, is the essence of the working arrangement (Abe & Mason, 2016). Such relationships include supervisor-subordinate relationships, peer worker relationships, workplace friendships, and customer relationships (Sias, 2013). Students in this case are the customers and the course tutors are the subordinate and their relationship with the coordinator as the leader at the study centre can affect how and when they approach him/her on an issue.

Dealing with course tutors and students complaints is the third factor considered in the study. Thomson (2013) posits that people in position of authority receive complaints from the subordinates and customers (tutors and students). The complaints will range from something very minor in nature, to something very serious. It is the responsibility of supervisors to determine whether a complaint is legitimate or not and how to respond to it. Thomson further remarked that mishandling or delay in handling complaints can have future and dire consequences on the supervisor's and institutional performance. Complaints from course tutors could hover around wages, workloads, teaching and learning materials among others. Complaints from customers/students may centre on timetable, lecture halls, course tutors, and teaching and learning materials. Thus, dealing with complaints from both subordinates and customers herein referred to as course tutors and students is included in this study as a variable/factor.

The last factor considered in this study is teaching and learning facilities. Teaching and learning hardly happens in a vacuum. Boateng (2011) found that physical facilities, funds and other resources are essential in any institution of learning if any academic excellence is to be achieved in Ghana. Teaching and learning facilities for distance education could include modules, classrooms, libraries, furniture, lavatories and maker/chalkboards among others. Mwema and Gachunga (2014) disclosed that poor school facilities such as lack of basic teaching materials and absence of sufficient equipment for laboratories and inadequate infrastructure such as little lighting, drab walls also add to the woes of unmotivated teachers in Nairobi, Kenya. This has some negative implications for the teaching and learning processes and students' achievements.

1.2 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The position of the study is that study centre coordinators need to be assessed by both students and course tutors. Areas considered in this study necessary for this assessment are human relations, handling of complaints, behavior and teaching and learning facilities at the study centres. The study assumes that the outcome of the evaluation could be high or low. The level of the rating of coordinators either lowly or highly could influence students and tutors performance on the distance mode.

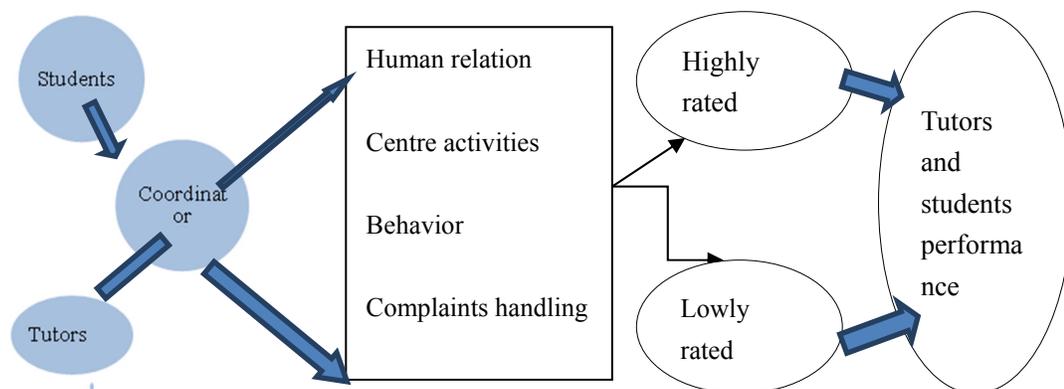


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of the Study Showing Tutors and Students Appraisal of Centre Coordinators on Factors of the Study.

Source: Authors' own construct.

2. Methodology

The study adopted the pragmatists' ontology and epistemic approach which influenced the adoption of both quantitative and qualitative paradigms in carrying out the study. A multilevel design or concurrent embedded design was adopted for the study. The concurrent embedded strategy or design according to Creswell (2009) is a mixed method design, which allows the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously. Concurrent embedded strategy, however, has a primary method that guides the study and a secondary database that provides a supporting role in the procedure. Thus, the primary method for this study is the quantitative dimension supported by the qualitative approach.

The research population comprised a total of over 2,700 course tutors and 16,037 final year students pursuing both business and education programmes of the College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast. Respondents were randomly selected from 53 out of 83 study centres in the ten regions of Ghana (CoDE, 2017). The lottery method of the simple random sampling techniques was employed to draw a sample of 1228 students and 217 course tutors representing approximately 8 percent of the population for course tutors and students. The total sample of 1445 (1228 students and 217 tutors) is more than twice the recommended sample of 711 (241 students and 370 tutors) using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample determination table. Purposive sampling technique was used to select fifteen coordinators for triangulation purposes.

The research instruments were questionnaire for students and course tutors; and interview guide for coordinators. The self-developed questionnaire comprised items that were measured on 4 points interval scale of 1 to 4 with 1 representing low level of agreement with positive statement while 4 represented high level of agreement. The

questionnaire was divided into five parts. Part A addressed respondents' demographic characteristics. The remaining parts (Part B to Part E) were on the four dimensions of the study as indicated in the research question. The questionnaire was deemed appropriate for the data collection because the population is large and could read and write (Segbenya, Ghansah, Gonu & Peniana, 2015). The questionnaire also captured both opened and closed ended items. The validity and reliability of instruments was tested with thirty (30) students drawn from both business and education programmes at the University of Cape Coast Study Centre. A Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of .921 was obtained indicating that the instrument was good to be used. Additionally, fifteen individual in-depth interviews were conducted on fifteen study centre coordinators.

Fifty-three research assistants were trained to assist the two main researchers to administer the research instrument. Eight weekends (June to July, 2016) were used for the data collection exercise. In all 1228 completed questionnaire (1011 students and 217 tutors) were received out of 1445 sampled respondents representing 85 percent. Quantitative data was analysed with descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviations; and inferential statistics such as independent t-test and One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Thematic analysis and pattern matching were used for the qualitative data gathered.

3. Results and Discussion

The result is presented based on the research question and the six hypotheses guiding the study. Results for coordinators' response to students and tutors complaints/challenges as demanded by the research question one are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Coordinators' Response to Students/Tutors Problems

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						L.B	U.B
The Coordinator is always ready to listen to tutors problems	Student	1011	3.4243	.77265	.02430	3.3766	3.4720
	Tutors	217	3.5023	.78837	.05352	3.3968	3.6078
	Total	1228	3.4381	.77570	.02214	3.3947	3.4815
The Coordinator takes immediate steps to solve tutors problems	Student	1011	3.2928	.75997	.02390	3.2459	3.3397
	Tutors	217	3.3041	.82194	.05580	3.1942	3.4141
	Total	1228	3.2948	.77095	.02200	3.2516	3.3380
The coordinator provides feedback on tutors problems	Student	1011	3.2146	.81230	.02555	3.1645	3.2648
	Tutors	217	3.2535	.76091	.05165	3.1516	3.3553
	Total	1228	3.2215	.80329	.02292	3.1765	3.2665

Source: Field survey (2016)

Minimum=1, Maximum= 4

It is evident from Table 1 that coordinators at the various centres of the distance education programmes in Ghana were rated high and very high by their students and course tutors for their readiness to listen to both students and course tutors. Majority (M=3.4381, SD=.776) of both students (M=3.4; SD=.773) and course tutors (M=3.5023; SD=.788) indicated that they strongly agreed to the statement that the centre coordinators were ready to listen to their problems amidst these coordinators' busy schedules at the study centres. The least rated item with regards to centre coordinators responds to students and tutors problem was coordinators ability to provide feedback on tutors and students problems with the lowest mean and standard deviation values of (M=3.2215, SD=.803). However, course tutors perceived all the items higher (higher means values) as compared to their students. It is clear that the level of percentage for listening to students/tutors problem was higher as compared to taking immediate step to provide solution to the problems and to provide feedback.

Coordinators interviewed also confirmed students and tutors' assertion but gave reasons for their inability to quickly address stakeholders' problems. These reasons include lack of capacity to solve most of students/tutors challenges; delay from the appropriate units at the College/Head Office to give feedback.

"Most of students and course tutors' challenges are not within our means to solve for them. We forward such complaints to CoDE/Cape Coast and until we hear from them we are totally incapacitated to solve

such problem in relations to results, deferment, transit, re-sit exams among others”(CCI).

“We coordinators also teach to be paid and combining it with students complaints is a challenge to us” (CC5)

This means that the coordinators were unable to solve some tutors and students' problems due to constraints. This finding corroborates with that of Burns (2013) that resource and technology constraints on the part of leaders as indicated in DCC management model, affects their performance.

Table 2 looks at coordinators' human relations with students and course tutors as key stakeholders.

Table 2. Study Centre Coordinators' Human Relations with Stakeholders

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Conf. Interval for Mean	
						L. B.	U. B.
The Coordinators' relationship with both staff and students is cordial	Student	1011	3.5193	.78120	.02457	3.4711	3.5675
	Tutors	217	3.5115	.75835	.05148	3.4101	3.6130
	Total	1228	3.5179	.77691	.02217	3.4744	3.5614
The Coordinators' doors are always opened to both students and tutors	Student	1011	3.5173	.78504	.02469	3.4689	3.5658
	Tutors	217	3.5253	.75188	.05104	3.4247	3.6259
	Total	1228	3.5187	.77899	.02223	3.4751	3.5623
Tutors and students are free to approach the Coordinator	Student	1011	3.5430	.76746	.02414	3.4957	3.5904
	Tutors	217	3.5806	.72915	.04950	3.4831	3.6782
	Total	1228	3.5497	.76067	.02171	3.5071	3.5923

Source: Field survey (2016)

Minimum=1, Maximum= 4

From Table 2, it can be seen that coordinators were rated high and very high for their approachability ($M=3.5497$, $SD=.761$) followed by "opened door" policy for all stakeholders ($M=3.5187$, $SD=.779$) and their cordial relationship with students and tutors ($M=3.5179$; $SD=.777$). This means that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that centre coordinators were doing very well with their students and tutors in terms of their human relationship with them. Students perceived cordial relation higher while their tutors also perceived the other two items of coordinators' human relations, higher than them. This result agrees with the findings of Debrincat (2015) that openness between parties contributes to the quality of the relationship. Coordinators also admitted that they do their possible best to relate very well with students and tutors. However, coordinators revealed that they were also bothered with inundated calls from students even during odd hours.

“Though it is difficult but I try to relate with students and tutors well. The only problem i have with them is the inundated calls even in the night” (CC5).

Table 3 shows the results for how student and course tutors on the distance education programme in Ghana felt their study centre coordinators carried out learning and teaching activities at the various study centres.

The results show that majority of the respondents rated three items very high and just high for the remaining three items. The first three items with very high rating were enough class rooms for teaching ($M=3.5733$; $SD=.709$); I will recommend the centre to other students ($M=3.4308$; $SD=.7835$); enough rooms for examinations and quizzes ($M=3.3542$; $SD=.879$). Additionally, the least of the items that respondents just rated high were: the cleanliness of the lavatories and study centre ($M=2.5212$; $SD=1.001$) and the provisions of teaching materials like chalk and maker ($M=3.1735$; $SD=.949$).

This finding is in agreement with Mwenda (2015) that lack of teaching and learning facilities has some negative implications for the teaching and learning processes and students' achievements.

A study centre coordinator in an in-depth individual interview also explained the reason for the lower rating for cleanliness of the lavatories and study centre. Some of these reasons were that amount allocated for sanitation was paid to hosting institutions but the cleaners for these institutions worked weekdays. For this reason distance students who use the study centre weekends do not benefit from their services. Another reason was that some study centre coordinators had only one cleaner either only responsible for the cleaning of the lavatories or the classrooms. For example:

“The money for sanitation was paid to the school authorities and we use the facilities on weekends so we do not get their cleaners to clean the places for our usage. We have to personally ask the students to sweep their classrooms and pay other people personally to take care of the lavatories” (CC3).

Table 3. Stakeholders Rating of Coordinators in Terms of Study Centre Activities

Items		N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						L. B.	U. B.
The Coordinator organises enough class rooms for our face-to-face sessions	Student	1011	3.5767	.71394	.02245	3.5326	3.6207
	Tutors	217	3.5576	.68560	.04654	3.4659	3.6493
	Total	1228	3.5733	.70878	.02023	3.5336	3.6130
There are enough and good chairs and desks for our classes and examinations	Student	1011	3.3581	.88238	.02775	3.3036	3.4125
	Tutors	217	3.3364	.86721	.05887	3.2204	3.4524
	Total	1228	3.3542	.87941	.02510	3.3050	3.4035
The wash rooms/ lavatory at my study centre are kept clean	Student	1011	2.5143	1.01793	.03201	2.4515	2.5772
	Tutors	217	2.5530	.97097	.06591	2.4231	2.6829
	Total	1228	2.5212	1.00951	.02881	2.4647	2.5777
The classrooms and the environs of the centre are kept clean always	Student	1011	3.0455	.82288	.02588	2.9947	3.0963
	Tutors	217	3.0507	.86185	.05851	2.9354	3.1660
	Total	1228	3.0464	.82955	.02367	3.0000	3.0929
I will recommend the centre to colleagues	Student	1011	3.4075	.79609	.02504	3.3584	3.4566
	Tutors	217	3.5392	.71335	.04843	3.4437	3.6346
	Total	1228	3.4308	.78345	.02236	3.3869	3.4746
Teaching and learning materials i.e. chalk, marker etc are always provided	Student	1011	3.1553	.95576	.03006	3.0963	3.2143
	Tutors	217	3.2581	.91679	.06224	3.1354	3.3807
	Total	1228	3.1735	.94944	.02709	3.1203	3.2266

Source: Field survey (2016)

Minimum=1, Maximum= 4

The coordinator however, gave an assurance that the College has asked some coordinators to engage the services of private cleaners for the college to pay them directly. The fear of the interviewees with regards to this noble idea from the College was the regularity of payment to the cleaners.

“This thing will soon be a thing of the past. Now that some of my colleagues and myself have been asked to recruit some private cleaners so that the College can pay them, am sure students will no longer worry about cleanliness of their lavatories and their classrooms” (CC6).

Thus, the assertion by Herbert (2010) that resource constraint serves as a major challenge for meeting stakeholders' expectation is upheld in this study

Results for how students and course tutors rated study centre coordinators with regards to their behavior are presented in Table 4.

It is clear from the Table that respondents rated centre coordinators very high for almost all the items for study centre coordinators behavior towards students and tutors. Specifically, availability of coordinators manning the various study centres of the distance education programmes (M=3.6686; SD=.680) punctuality (M=3.6474; SD=.690) and interest in the coordinator's activities (M=3.6221; SD=.719) were rated very high. The least (6th) and the only item majority of the respondents rated just high was coordinators' acceptance of criticism/feedback and learn from them (M=3.2402; SD=.787). This means that coordinators hardly accept criticism from subordinates and students. This could affect stakeholders satisfaction as indicated by Holton (2014) that leadership behavior seriously affects customers satisfaction.

Table 4. Appraisal of Coordinators Behavior

		N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
The Coordinator is always available during face-to-face sessions and exams	Student	1011	3.6706	.67730	.02130	3.6288	3.7124
	Tutors	217	3.6590	.69644	.04728	3.5658	3.7522
	Total	1228	3.6686	.68044	.01942	3.6305	3.7067
The Coordinator is always punctual	Student	1011	3.6449	.70044	.02203	3.6017	3.6881
	Tutors	217	3.6590	.64105	.04352	3.5732	3.7448
	Total	1228	3.6474	.69009	.01969	3.6088	3.6860
The Coordinator always comply with CCE'S directives	Student	1011	3.5806	.70793	.02226	3.5369	3.6243
	Tutors	217	3.5576	.72498	.04922	3.4606	3.6546
	Total	1228	3.5765	.71073	.02028	3.5368	3.6163
The Coordinator can be seen to be interested in the work that he/she is doing	Student	1011	3.6202	.72450	.02279	3.5755	3.6649
	Tutors	217	3.6313	.69558	.04722	3.5383	3.7244
	Total	1228	3.6221	.71921	.02052	3.5819	3.6624
The Coordinator accepts constructive criticism, feedback and learn from it	Student	1011	3.2255	.80382	.02528	3.1759	3.2751
	Tutors	217	3.3088	.70156	.04763	3.2149	3.4026
	Total	1228	3.2402	.78709	.02246	3.1962	3.2843
The Coordinator has both good work ethics and professional skills	Student	1011	3.4936	.73975	.02327	3.4479	3.5392
	Tutors	217	3.5484	.70626	.04794	3.4539	3.6429
	Total	1228	3.5033	.73396	.02094	3.4622	3.5443

Source: Field survey (2016)

Minimum=1, Maximum= 4

3.1 Testing for Hypotheses of the Study

The study hypothesized that:

H0 1: *There is no statistically significant difference between how students perceive coordinators' performance as compared to that of course tutors.*

Independent sample t-test was conducted to determine the statistical significance differences in perception of tutors as against that of students with regards to their study centre coordinators. This was conducted to test hypothesis one of the study. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. T Test Results Showing the Significance Level of How Course Tutors and Students Perceive Their Study Centre Coordinators

	Assessor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig
Response To Problems	Student	1011	3.2885	.66184	.02082	.604
	Tutors	217	3.3141	.65833	.04469	
Human Relationship	Student	1011	3.5265	.72518	.02281	.815
	Tutors	217	3.5392	.69731	.04734	
Centre Activities	Student	1011	3.2024	.60682	.01908	.309
	Tutors	217	3.2488	.62599	.04249	
Behaviour	Student	1011	3.5392	.59872	.01883	.629
	Tutors	217	3.5607	.56840	.03859	

Source: Field survey (2016)

Table 5 shows that the course tutors perceived the four factors of the study (response to problems, human relations, centre activities and behavior) higher than their students did. However, there was no statistically significant differences in how course tutors perceived these factors as against that of students. The Sig. values obtained for the four factors of the study such as response to problems (sig=.604), human relations (sig=.815), centre activities (sig=.309) and behavior (sig=.629) confirms their non-significance. Since all these factors were not significant, the eta score was not calculated. Based on this result the alternate hypothesis was rejected and the null hypothesis was accepted which state that “there is no statistically significant difference between how students perceive coordinators’ performance as compared to that of course tutors”.

The study hypothesized that:

H₀ 2: *There is no statistically significant difference in performance of study centre coordinators in terms of their regional location and factors of the study such as response to challenges, human relations, organising teaching and learning activities at the study centres, and general behavior towards students and course tutors.*

To determine the regional rating of the coordinators, descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were used to present the results and this can be found in Table 6.

Table 6. Regional Rating of Coordinators in Terms of Response to Problems and Human Relations

Regions	N	Means	Std deviation	Std Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Volta	96	3.559	0.51525	0.05259	3.4546	3.6634
Northern	39	3.4829	0.72021	0.11533	3.2494	3.7164
Upper East.	58	3.4713	0.51407	0.0675	3.3361	3.6064
Eatern	99	3.436	0.53701	0.05397	3.3289	3.5431
Upper West	96	3.4201	0.51241	0.0523	3.3163	3.524
Central	116	3.3118	0.64588	0.05997	3.193	3.4306
Western	124	3.3091	0.61987	0.05567	3.199	3.4193
Brong Ahafo.	144	3.3032	0.59349	0.04946	3.2055	3.401
Greater Accra.	130	3.2667	0.68878	0.06041	3.1471	3.3862
Ashanti	325	3.0708	0.75798	0.04205	2.9881	3.1535
Total	1228	3.293	0.66103	0.01886	3.256	3.33
Human Relation						
Volta	96	3.7882	0.50983	0.05203	3.6849	3.8915
Eastern	99	3.7205	0.54023	0.0543	3.6128	3.8283
Upper Eeast	58	3.6839	0.43895	0.05764	3.5685	3.7993
Northern	39	3.6581	0.66441	0.10639	3.4427	3.8735
Upper West	96	3.625	0.50553	0.05159	3.5226	3.7274
Western	124	3.6102	0.58392	0.05244	3.5064	3.714
Greater Accra	130	3.5923	0.70834	0.06213	3.4694	3.7152
Central	116	3.5632	0.74265	0.06895	3.4266	3.6998
Brong Ahafo	144	3.5093	0.68159	0.0568	3.397	3.6215
Ashanti	325	3.2626	0.89011	0.04937	3.1654	3.3597
Total	1228	3.5288	0.72007	0.02055	3.4885	3.5691

Scale: 1.5-2.4 = low; 2.5 -3.4=high and 3.5-4.40 =very high

Minimum=1, Maximum= 4

Source: Field survey (2016)

It is evident from Table 6 that in terms of response to tutors and students’ problem as well as coordinators’ human relations, all the study centre coordinators in all the ten regions of Ghana were rated very high since every mean value was higher than the 2.5 threshold. However, Volta Region coordinators were rated higher for response to problems (M=3.56, std=0.515) and human relation (3.8; 0.51) than the remaining nine regions. Ashanti region

coordinators however were the least within the very high bracket with means and standard deviation values for response to challenges (3.07; std= 0.76) and human relations (M= 3.3; std=0.89).

Results reflecting the regional outlook in terms of coordinators rating in terms of the last two factors of the study such as centre activities and behavior towards stakeholders can be seen from Table 7.

Table 7. Regional Rating of Coordinators in Terms of Centre Activities and Behavior

Regions	N	Means	Std deviation	Std Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Northern	39	3.3641	0.58915	0.09434	3.1731	3.5551
Volta	96	3.3604	0.583	0.0595	3.2423	3.4785
Brong Ahafo.	144	3.3181	0.50972	0.04248	3.2341	3.402
Central	116	3.3155	0.65682	0.06098	3.1947	3.4363
Greater Accra.	130	3.2631	0.52946	0.04644	3.1712	3.355
Western	124	3.2403	0.58711	0.05272	3.136	3.3447
Upper West.	96	3.2125	0.49316	0.05033	3.1126	3.3124
Eastern	99	3.1111	0.60893	0.0612	2.9897	3.2326
Ashanti	325	3.0831	0.70614	0.03917	3.006	3.1601
Upper East	58	3.0759	0.443	0.05817	2.9594	3.1923
Total	1228	3.2106	0.61025	0.01741	3.1764	3.2448
Behaviour						
Volta	96	3.6892	0.45986		3.5961	3.7824
Eastern	99	3.6734	0.44855	0.04508	3.5839	3.7629
Upper East.	58	3.6437	0.362	0.04753	3.5485	3.7389
Upper West.	96	3.625	0.52091	0.05316	3.5195	3.7305
Brong Ahafo.	144	3.5995	0.51145	0.04262	3.5153	3.6838
Western	124	3.5995	0.50781	0.0456	3.5092	3.6897
Northern	39	3.5641	0.70877	0.11349	3.3343	3.7939
Central	116	3.5474	0.56629	0.05258	3.4433	3.6516
Greater Accra.	130	3.5231	0.62352	0.05469	3.4149	3.6313
Ashanti	325	3.3749	0.7212	0.04001	3.2962	3.4536
Total	1228	3.543	0.59331	0.01693	3.5098	3.5762

Scale: 1.5-2.4 = low; 2.5 -3.4=high and 3.5-4.40 =very high

Minimum=1, Maximum= 4

Source: Field survey (2016)

From the Table, it can be seen that all coordinators in the ten regions of Ghana were rated very high in terms of centre activities and behaving well towards stakeholders. However Northern Region and Volta Region coordinators were rated best for centre activities (M=3.4; std= 0.59) and behavior towards students (M= 3.69; Std= 0.05) respectively. Upper East region and Ashanti region coordinators were the least among the highly rated coordinators in terms of centre activities (M=3.08; std= 0.44) and behavior towards students (M= 3.4; Std= 0.7) respectively. Thus the null hypothesis that there was no statistically significant difference in performance of study centre coordinators in terms of their regional location and the four factors of the study was rejected. This could positively influence productivity and job satisfaction. This finding corroborates that of Blundel and Lockett (2011) who found that good leadership behavior enhances productivity and satisfaction.

The study hypothesized that:

H₀ 3: There is no statistically significant difference between zones of coordinators and the factors of the study such as response to problems, human relations, centre activities and behavior.

The ANOVA Table (Table 8) presents results for zones of coordinators and factors of the study.

Table 8. ANOVA Results on Differences among the Zones in Terms of Rating the Factors of the Study

	Zones	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	F	Sig.	N ²
Response to problems	Northern	193	3.4482	.55841	.04020	3.3689	3.5	13.74	.000	.02
	Middle	568	3.1934	.69925	.02934	3.1357	3.3			
	Southern	466	3.3494	.63437	.02939	3.2917	3.4			
	Total	1227	3.2927	.66121	.01888	3.2557	3.3			
Human relationship	Northern	193	3.6494	.52124	.03752	3.5754	3.7	16.11	.000	.03
	Middle	568	3.4049	.80754	.03388	3.3384	3.5			
	Southern	466	3.6302	.65243	.03022	3.5708	3.7			
	Total	1227	3.5289	.72034	.02056	3.4886	3.6			
Centre activities	Northern	193	3.2021	.50744	.03653	3.1300	3.3	7.08	.001	.01
	Middle	568	3.1475	.65157	.02734	3.0938	3.2			
	Southern	466	3.2901	.58918	.02729	3.2365	3.3			
	Total	1227	3.2103	.61040	.01743	3.1761	3.2			
Behaviour	Northern	193	3.6183	.52288	.03764	3.5441	3.7	5.508	.004	.01
	Middle	568	3.4839	.64377	.02701	3.4308	3.5			
	Southern	466	3.5837	.54982	.02547	3.5336	3.6			
	Total	1227	3.5429	.59354	.01694	3.5097	3.6			

Source: Field survey (2016)

Minimum=1, Maximum= 4

Table 8 shows the significance levels of the four factors of the study as a way of testing for hypothesis three of the study. A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the differences in terms of the impact of the four factors of the study on respondents with regards to their zones as measured by the Life Orientation test (LOT). Subjects were divided into three groups according to their zones (Group 1: Northern zone; Group 2: Middle zone; Group 3: Southern Zone).

There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level in LOT scores for the three Zones four factors of study; that is Response to problems [$F(2, 1227) = 13.740, p = 0.000$], human relations [$F(2, 1227) = 16.106, P = 0.000$]; Centre activities [$F(2, 1227) = 7.075, P = 0.004$]; and Behaviour [$F(2, 1227) = 5.508, p = 0.004$]. Though there was a statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups as determined by the eta square was quite small. The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .02 for response to problems, .3 for human relations, .01 for both centre activities and Behaviour of coordinators.

Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score in terms of coordinators responses to stakeholders problems for Northern Zone ($M = 3.45, SD = .56$) was significantly different from Middle Zone ($M = 3.19, SD = .699$) and Southern Zone ($M = 3.34, SD = .63$). The same scenario was repeated for behavior, human relations and centre activities. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted that: there is statistically significant difference between zones of coordinators and the factors of the study such as response to problems, human relations, centre activities and behavior. Thus, students and tutors in the Northern Zone perceived response to complaints, human relations and behavior higher than their counterparts in other Zones did.

The study hypothesized that:

H₀ 4: *There is no statistically significant difference in rating for study centre coordinators in terms of sex of a coordinator and factors of the study such as response to problems, human relations, centre activities and behavior.*

Hypothesis four of the study sought to find out if the performances of study centre coordinators per the rating of respondents will differ based on their sex. Means and standard deviation were used to test for this hypothesis, and the result can be seen from Table 9. Table 9 shows that there was only two female (4%) study centre coordinators among the fifty one coordinators considered in the study. The two female coordinators were however rated low with mean

values for “response to tutors and students problems” ranging between $M=2.29$ and $M=2.39$; human relations $M=2.19$ and $M=2.35$. All these mean values were below the 2.5 threshold. The male counterparts however were rated higher for “response to problem” with mean values (ranging between $M=2.79$ and $M=3.80$) exceeding the threshold of $M=2.5$.

Although female coordinators had mean values higher than 2.5 threshold for “behavior towards students and course tutors” (mean values ranging between $M=2.62$ and $M=2.91$), these coordinators also obtained the lowest mean with national position ranging between 50 and 51 (herein represented with $NP=50$ and $NP=51$). That notwithstanding, female coordinators were rated better in terms of “teaching and learning activities” at the centre with national position (NP) of 47 and 48 respectively as compared to all the earlier three variables discussed. Since female coordinators were rated lowest for three of the four variables of the study, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted that there were differences in rating for study centre coordinators based on sex. Thus, the assertion by Blundel and Lockett (2011) that female serves as better leaders as compared to their male counterpart is not supported by the findings of this study.

The study hypothesized that:

H₀₅: There are no statistically significant differences in rating of coordinators based on coordinators rank and the factors of the study such as response to problems, human relations, centre activities and behavior.

Results for the test for hypothesis five can also be found in Table 9. Mean values were used to determine the position (herein referred to as national position (NP)) of the centre coordinators across the length and breadth of the country. It is obvious from Table 9 that 45% of centre coordinators who were ranked as tutors had mean values ranging between $M=2.39$ and $M=3.80$ for “responses to tutors and students problems” and $M=2.35$ and $M=3.899$ for coordinators “human relations”. Both high and low mean values were respectively recorded for the 55% coordinators ranked as senior tutors with mean values ranging between $M=2.29$ and $M=3.76$ for “response to problem” and $M=2.19$ and $M=3.82$ for coordinators’ “human relations”. Mean values recorded for “centre activities” and “coordinators behaviour” were all above the mean threshold of $M=2.5$ for both coordinators ranked as tutors and senior tutors. The results mean that there was no difference in rating for centre coordinators in terms of rank of being a tutor or a senior tutor. Based on this result, the study accepted the null hypothesis that there were no statistically significant differences in rating of coordinators based on category of tutorship (that is either tutor or senior tutor). This result thus, agrees with the finding of Thomson (2013) that positionality of leaders does not influence their performance.

The study hypothesized that:

H₀₆: There is no statistically significant difference in rating for coordinators based on their age and the factors of the study such as response to problems, human relations, centre activities and behavior.

Results for the test of hypothesis six can also be found in Table 9. Age was categorized into four such as below 40; 41-50; 51-60; and above 60. From Table 9, it can be seen that the ranges of mean values obtained for coordinators below 40 years ($M=3.24$ and $M=3.57$); 41-50 years ($M=2.64$ and $M=3.71$); 51-60 years ($M=2.89$ and $M=3.56$) and above 60 years ($M=2.88$ and $M=3.68$) for “centre activities” were all above the mean threshold of $M=2.5$. The same scenario was found for ranges of mean values obtained for coordinators’ “behaviour” towards stakeholders across all the four categories of age groupings. Meanwhile, coordinators aged between 41-50 and 60 years respectively recorded mean values ranging between $M=2.39$ and $M=3.68$; and $M=2.29$ and $M=3.8$ for coordinators “response to students and course tutors’ problems.” Similar mean ranges were recorded for coordinators’ “human relation” across the same age groupings. This means that the performance of these coordinators was not influenced by coordinators’ age. Hence the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference in rating for coordinators based on their age and the factors of the study was accepted.

Table 9. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents and the Four Factors of the Study

Source: Fied survey (2016)

	Sex		Rank		Age			
	Male	Female	Tutor	Snr Tutor	Below 40	41-50	51-60	Above 60
No.	49	02	23	28	05	10	20	14
%	96%	4%	45%	55%	10%	20%	40%	30%
Response to problem								
Mean	2.79-3.80	2.29-2.39	2.39-3.80	2.29-3.76	2.98-3.75	2.39-3.68	2.79-3.68	2.29-3.8
ranges								
Std. Dev.	0.71-0.27	0.76-0.99	0.99-0.27	0.76-0.33	0.69-0.24	0.99-0.38	0.71-0.35	0.77-0.27
ranges								
NP	1-49	50-51	1-50	2-51	3-47	5-50	4-49	1-51
Ranges								
Human relations								
Mean	3.04-3.899	2.19-2.35	2.35-3.899	2.19-3.82	3.41-3.86	2.35-3.94	3.04-3.89	2.19-3.89
ranges								
Std. Dev.	0.86-0.25	1.02-1.124	1.12-0.26	1.02-0.31	0.83-0.22	1.12-0.23	0.88-0.25	1.02-0.26
ranges								
NP	1-49	50-51	3-50	1-51	5-43	1-50	4-48	3-51
Ranges								
Centre activities								
Mean	2.8-3.68	2.83-2.88	2.83-3.68	2.88-3.11	3.24-3.57	2.64-3.71	2.89-3.56	2.88-3.68
ranges								
Std. Dev.	0.62-0.26	0.79 -0.41	0.79-0.26	0.41-0.52	0.64-0.21	0.79-0.28	0.89-0.29	0.79-0.26
ranges								
NP	1-46 & 49	47-48	1-48	2-47	4-24	2-51	5-49	1-50
Ranges								
Behaviour								
Mean	3.11-3.93	2.62-2.91	2.62-3.94	2.91-3.79	3.56-3.75	2.62-3.87	3.11-3.88	2.91-3.94
ranges								
Std. Dev.	0.75-0.131	0.56-0.93	0.93-0.13	0.56-0.25	0.42-0.26	0.93-0.17	0.75-0.15	0.85-0.13
ranges								
NP	1-49	50-51	1-51	2-50	8-31	3-51	2-48	1-50
Ranges								

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study found that study centre coordinators were rated very high by both students and course tutors in the areas considered in this study such as handling complaints, human relations, centre activities and behavior. Coordinators behavior and human relations were rated higher as compared to complaints handling and organising study centre activities. Reasons for lower rating for complaints handling (in relation to other factors of the study but not based on the scale) was that coordinators were not able to solve students and tutors problem as compared to listening to their complaints. This was also explained by the coordinators that most of these complaints were not within their means to solve; and combining teaching and listening to tutors and students complaints was a challenge for coordinators. Centre activities was also rated the third because respondents concluded that lavatories were not kept very clean. Reasons advanced by coordinators for this was that amount allocated for sanitation was paid to hosting institutions and the cleaners for these institutions worked weekdays but not weekends that distance students use the facilities.

Course tutors perceived the four factors of the study higher than their students did. However, there was no statistically significance differences in how course tutors perceived these factors as against that of the students. Northern Zone perceived complaints/problem handling, human relations and behavior higher than the other two zones. Southern Zone however, perceived organising centre activities higher than Northern and Middle Zones. Though there was statistically significant differences in how these factors were perceived in the Zones, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups as determined by the eta square was quite small.

Based on the above conclusions, it is recommended that:

1. The College (CoDE/UCC) should increase the capacity of coordinators for district and regional study centres as well as the zones in terms of resources and technology to be able to take immediate steps to address the challenges students are facing.
2. The College (CoDE/UCC) should waive the teaching load of study centre coordinators so that they can take time to listen and take steps to resolve students and tutors challenges. Thus, these coordinators could be paid a flat rate of 6 hour teaching to compensate for the teaching load.
3. Payment for sanitation should be made directly to the study centre coordinators to be able to hire private cleaners to take care of the lavatories

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